



~ Part 24 ~
Reflections on a Common Theme
Art and Artists

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CLOUD COUNTY

Stained Glass in Cloud County

by Joan Nothern

Dana Embree moved to Glasco from New Concord, Ohio in 1971, at age 20. He claims a lifelong passion for stained glass, but he wasn't initiated in actual work with glass until he took classes at Cloud County Community College in 1978.

By coincidence, Glasco established a Free University in 1981. It was called GIFTS: Glasco Inspires Free Talent Sharing, and Dana stepped forward to share his new skills in classes in Glasco.

This marked a real coming together of several distinguishing factors: A community blessed with four churches with varied stained glass windows; a young artisan who inspired interest in stained glass; and the creative contribution of the Free University.

By 1991 Dana opened a stained-glass studio-workshop on Main Street, Glasco, where he worked, sold stained glass, and taught. In 1993 he mentored youth in the confirmation class at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, as they created a large nativity double window for the Sunday School area of the Parish Hall. During the 1990s he installed public stained glass in Concordia and Miltonvale as well as Glasco—stirring interest in stained glass throughout the county. In 2001 Cloud County was named the Stained Glass Capitol of Kansas.

The employees of the bank designed a stunning stained glass piece to be displayed in the window to honor the state capitol designation. The top of the Glasco water tower was painted with a bold stained glass design.

In 2001, Dana was an artist-in-residence, working with the Glasco Grade School Fourth Grade Class to design and make a stained glass panel. They celebrated an 1884 truss bridge over the Solomon River, a local site of historical significance and pride. This piece can be seen at the Glasco Community Museum.

Although Dana Embree has moved back to Ohio, the legacy of stained glass in Glasco is growing. Each March is devoted to hosting tours of stained glass in the churches and on Main Street. St. Mary's Catholic Church has stunning 100-year-old windows, dating from the construction of the church. The Methodist Church and Christian Church each have a 1914 WCTU window. These are rare and unusual, with two within a block of each other. St. Paul's Lutheran has contemporary stained-glass designs, dating from 1970-2000. They are classic "teaching windows" in modern dress.

Visitors are welcome anytime to see these windows. Dana's own statement might best encourage you to come: It is the warmth of working with glass, and the thrill of seeing the ever changing effects on each piece as light sources change, that keeps my interest fresh. This is what accounts for my desire to share the skill to work with glass and its appreciation with others. I believe art, especially stained glass, must be out where it can be shared and enjoyed by all.

OSBORNE COUNTY

Alton Artists

by Carolyn Williams

The Alton community is rife with artists!. You wouldn't know it because it doesn't "look" like an artists' colony. But we have people in the community who communicate their artistry to the world by crafting and then selling them as Christmas gifts, decorations, and goodies.

The local PRIDE committee helped to sponsor The Craft Basket which is an organization made up of ladies and gents in the community who make their own creations and sell them from The Craft

Basket at Christmas time. The endeavor opens on the first weekend of November and continues until the last shopping day before Christmas. Those who make and sell their "wares" are expected to work either one day or two half days during that two month period and pay \$20 which is used for advertising purposes.

Some of the items that have been sold here are crocheted, embroidered, knitted, painted, thrown, as in making pottery, penciled, laser cut, or sewn. All of the items are made by the person selling them. This is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to market their skills and for the rest of us to purchase a truly handmade item for that special person on our Christmas list.

The hours the "Basket" is open are Sundays, 1-5 pm; Fridays & Saturdays 9 am-5 pm. Saturday mornings are really the times to come as there are always baked goods for sale! We have everything from homemade pies, Christmas cookies & candies, homemade jellies and jams, and breads, all for your enjoyment or gifting.

Didn't think we had that much artistry, did you? Come to Alton and meet some of the artists in residence here.

ROOKS COUNTY

Kelly Hull--Woodston Artist

by Roger Hrabe and Connie Hull

Kelly and D. Lee Hull of rural Woodston were leaders of the art community, she a painter and he a photographer. They both produced interpretive landscapes. Their work is found in many public and private collections in the region and throughout the world. Thelma Kelly Hull was best known for her paintings of Kansas landscapes and postrock scenes.

Thelma Eileen Kelly was born November 16, 1912, in North Platte, Nebraska, daughter of Kathryn and Judge Fred Kelly. When she was about a year old they moved to Phillipsburg where she grew up and graduated high school at age 16. She graduated from Fort Hays State University in 1936. She married Lee Hull in 1937, and they had three children. Kelly spent her life teaching until retiring in 1968.

When Kelly retired from teaching, she went back to college at Fort Hays State University and earned a Master's Degree in Art when she was 60 years old. Her mature artwork is well known and recognized in the NW Kansas region. She won numerous awards for work in juried art shows. Her paintings are included in many public collections, regionally, including the Dane G. Hansen Memorial Museum in Logan KS; Hays Medical Center (Hospital), Hays KS, First Presbyterian Church, Hays, KS; Fort Hays State University, Hays KS; and the Midwest Bank, Plainville KS, to name a few. Her work is included in private collections throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Kelly was an art instructor through an outreach program from Colby Community College until 1999. The next year she taught art to a group of women in Kirwin KS. That year she retired at the age of 88.

She was a charter member of the Society of Kansas Painters, West; one of the founders of the Kansas Watercolor Society; and member of International Society of Artists, Hays Arts Council, Mid-America Arts and Crafts Association; Mountainside Art Guild, Lakewood, CO, Daughters of the American Revolution, Phi Kappa Phi Academic Society, and Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority. Her name is listed in the International Directory of Art. Kelly and Lee lived in the Ash Rock Community north of Woodston. She died on June 29, 2003. Additional information may be found at <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=71508350>

GRAHAM COUNTY

Michael Boss—Artist

Michael Boss has been a resident of Graham County most of his life and most probably was born with a paintbrush in his right hand. He has been professionally creating aviation, space, and railroad history for over 35 years.

His earliest art reflects the same expression as today, a wide range of subjects from touchable man-made creations, to magnificent international backdrops of today and yesteryear, and deep space. Mike's formative years were filled with highly unimaginative grad school, highly imaginative writings, and plastic model kits, some television and movies, but most of all, many of the illustrators of the fifties and sixties.

The brilliant men and women writing for Little Golden Books, Treasure Books, Whitman, and others brought visions of characters dreamed up from both fact and fiction. The gifted illustrators brought those characters to colorful life, inspiring millions of children to live, grow, and succeed by reaching out and following their dreams. Influential talent who fired Michael's synapses were Jo Kotula, British painter Terence Cuneo, and, most of all, Los Angeles illustrator, Jack Leynwood.

After graduating from high school, Boss majored in his other life's passion, music. For several years he had kept an article from Private Pilot magazine, and rereading it decided to touch base with the soon-to-be mentor. While a music major and double bass player at Southern Illinois University, Michael called his childhood hero, Jack Leynwood.

Following Leynwood's practice, Mike continues to paint a full spectrum of aviation, space, rail, marine, landscapes, etc., never to be trenched into just one or two genres.

A unique aspect to all of Mike's works is the personal connection he gains for each painting through extensive research. His attention to detail is reflected in every facet, from period costumes and colors, right down to direction and time-of-day lighting. Each painting has a story of its own, as seen through the annals of history and through the eyes of the man who holds the brush.

The only thing fonder to Michael's heart than the canvas and his music was Buckwheat, his late and beloved toy poodle, who can still be found, if you look very carefully, hanging out somewhere in all of his paintings.

Mike's art is in many private, corporate, and public collections, including the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory in Tucson, AZ., the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Union Pacific Railroad in Omaha, NE. Additional information about Mike and his artwork can be found at www.michaelboss.com.

Art at Citizens State Bank, Morland

[Board member Lori Cressler submitted these two articles, taken from the Morland pages of www.getruralkansas.org. These stories are especially fitting for this issue because Faye Minium was president of the Citizens State Bank and her brother, Floyd, collected the comic books on display.]

3-D Brick Mural by Jack Curran

The bas relief mural made entirely of brick, at the Citizens State Bank, entrance is a true work of art. Bella Vista, Arkansas artist Jack Curran sculpted the mural to commemorate the local paleontology dig funded by National Geographic in the mid-1980s. Curran used past concepts of the plants, animals, and terrain found in the area eight to ten million years ago along with the modern day digger.

The creation process: The clay for the bricks is mined and then mixed with water in a pug mill. When it reaches the correct consistency, the clay is cut with wire that spins in a circle and placed on a pallet and hauled to the studio to be set up on an easel. The mural is sculpted from these "green units" then totally disassembled with each brick being numbered. Then they are in the kiln for 3 days being fired. When the brick cools, the mural is set up for inspection, then shipped to the job site.

While the dig site is hidden away on private property without access, the artifacts can be seen at the Sternberg Museum of Natural History in Hays.

Floyd A. Riggs Memorial Comic Book Collection

Tarzan, Lassie, Cisco Kid, and more were protected in lard kegs for many years before reappearing and being hung on the walls at Citizens State Bank. Almost every room and office in the bank have the books adorning their walls. The books belonged to Floyd A. Riggs, brother of the president of CSB. Throughout the 1950s, Floyd collected the 10 and 25 cent comic books, stacking them in his closet. He once asked his mother to throw them away but she tucked them in the lard kegs instead and when opened, were still in great condition. Instead of selling them, the local art teacher presented to her an idea: to permanently put the collection on display at the bank. They were framed and bought by the bank for display.

The collection has been displayed at the Carnegie Center for the Arts in Dodge City, the Norman R. Eppink Art Gallery at Emporia State University in Emporia, and at the Dane Hansen Museum in Logan, along with various other places around the state. They've also been featured in 2002 Kansas Curiosities and You Know You're in Kansas When by Pam Grout, and Kansas Guidebook for Explorers by Marci Penner.

Visitors and explorers are more than welcome to stop in and see the comics anytime during normal business hours.